MR. K. R. NARAYANA AIYAR : (*a*) Purchases in all areas except Madras and Central Provinces were attended to by Messrs. Volkart Brothers on behalf of Travancore and Cochin jointly till November 1943 when the allotments under the preliminary Kharif Plan were made by the Government of India. Since then according to instructions from the Government of India the Supplying Administrations have employed their own Agents for making purchases.

(*b*) The question does not arise.

MR. P. S. NATARAJA PILLAI : Is it open to Government to fix the surcharge ?

MR. K. R. NARAYANA AIYAR : The supplying administration themselves levy the surcharge.

MR. P. S. NATARAJA PILLAI : What will be the surcharge for the Travancore Government ?

MR. K. R. NARAYANA AIYAR : 4 annas per maund. When the supply Administration appoints their own agents, they levy a surcharge.

Conveyance of food grains.

107 * MR. P. S. MOHAMED : Will the Government be pleased to state :

(*a*) the various arrangements made for the conveyance of rice and other food grains from Cochin to Alleppey and to other places ;

(*b*) whether on contract system or direct arrangement ;

(*c*) the arrangements made for the loading and unloading of the goods ;

(*d*) the arrangements made for the employment of coolies ;

(*e*) the rates of wages ; and

(*f*) the rates of hire of boats ?

MR. K. R. NARAYANA AIYAR : (*a*) Government food grains are transported from Cochin to Alleppey and various other places both by sea and backwaters according to availability of vessels with due regard to seasonal conditions. Steamers and country craft are used for transport by sea, while vallams, lighters and barges are used for transport along backwaters.

(*b*) Both on contract system and by direct arrangement. Transport by vallums is arranged directly by Government and by other vessels on contract system.

(*c*) Through contractors engaged for the purpose.

(*d*) The coolies required are employed by the contractors.

(*e*) Wages to boatmen in commandeered vallums are paid by Government at the following rates :—

(i) Rupee one per day for an adult.

(ii) Chuckrams fourteen per day for a boy.

No information is available in regard to the rates of wages paid by the contractors to their coolies.

(*f*) Boat hire for vallams is fixed according to registered tonnage as follows :—

(i) Bh. Re. (1) one per ton per mensem for vallums above 14 tons ;

(ii) Annas (10) ten only per ton per mensem for vallums of and below 14 tons.

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